



# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

## *Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs*

Deval L. Patrick  
GOVERNOR

Timothy P. Murray  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Ian A. Bowles  
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000  
Fax: (617) 626-1181  
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

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Contact: Kristen Tikonoff  
(617) 626-1809  
Lisa Capone  
(617) 626-1119

### **Strawberry Season Arrives Along With Summer**

*State agricultural officials suggest teaming Massachusetts-grown strawberries and locally-produced ice cream to mark the new season and National Dairy Month*

BOSTON – Friday officially marks the first day of summer – a perfect time to bite into ripe Massachusetts-grown strawberries found at local farmers’ markets and farm stands across the state.

Filled with Vitamin C and with less than one gram of fat and only 55 calories per cup, strawberries can add a sweet taste to a bowl of cereal or a salad, or – to celebrate June as National Dairy Month – can top off a sundae made with Massachusetts-produced ice cream.

Massachusetts strawberries are extra flavorful because they are vine-ripened near where they’re sold. Many farms also allow customers to pick their own strawberries.

“The number of farmers’ markets throughout the state shows us that the move to buy produce that’s locally grown is catching on,” said Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) Commissioner Doug Petersen. “These local markets and farms give communities character, and the only way to assure they’re still going to be there into the future is to continue to support local agriculture. At this time of year, buying locally grown strawberries and ice cream is a great way to do that.”

Mid-June through early July is peak season for Massachusetts strawberries. For the freshest berries of the season, visit one of the 59 farms from the Berkshires to Barnstable County that allow you to “pick-your-own” ([http://www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/strawberries\\_pyto.htm](http://www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/strawberries_pyto.htm)). For tips on selecting, storing and preparing strawberries, visit [www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/strawberries.htm](http://www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/strawberries.htm).

With the arrival of summer heat, locally-produced ice cream serves as a great way to cool off and support Massachusetts agriculture at the same time. According to the United States Department

of Agriculture, Massachusetts ranks fifth in the nation for ice cream and frozen dessert production and the Bay State tops the New England area list of dairy manufacturing plants, with 23 locations. Many of the Commonwealth's 189 dairy farms also sell ice cream directly to consumers, along with cheese, yogurt, milk and cream. The Massachusetts Association of Dairy Farmers estimates that Bay State dairy farms serve approximately 6,000 consumers each year.

For a list of dairy farms that sell products directly to the public, go to [www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/dairies.htm](http://www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/dairies.htm).

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